

15 Nov -- Copy of this memo, (along with original of  
memo we had sent to AD/RR) sent to [REDACTED] EQIAb3b

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Deputy Director/Intelligence

**SUBJECT:** Possible Propaganda Use by the Soviets of the  
Hatay Problem

1. The Geographic Research Area has brought to my attention that the Soviets, if they were to renew their waning propaganda on the Turkish-Syrian situation, might make use of the Syrian claim that the Turkish Province of Hatay rightfully belongs to Syria.

2. Although there is no evidence that the Soviets may wish to utilize the Hatay problem to indicate further their support of Syrian aspirations, they might soon do so since the 29th of November is the day commemorated in Syria for the loss of Hatay. A resume of the historical and geographical background of this "lost" territory follows.

3. With the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, Syria became an independent nation and the Sanjas of Alexandretta (later to be called Hatay) was included within Syrian territory. Disorders and general chaos within the new nation, however, resulted in the creation of a League of Nations mandate in 1922 with France as the governing power. In the 1930's, Turkey began negotiations with France for the annexation of the Sanjac. A reportedly rigged plebiscite was held in the Sanjac, disorder ensued, Turkish troops were sent in to re-establish order, and in 1939 France allowed Turkey to annex the disputed territory. It is now one of the 66 provinces of Turkey.

4. The Province of Hatay is located on the Mediterranean Sea at the western end of the Turkish-Syrian border. Along the sea is a narrow coastal plain containing relatively little of economic importance aside from the port of Iskenderon. This port, however, is the third largest port in Turkey and that country's second most important naval base. The coastal plain is backed by a forested mountain spur, to the east of which lies an extensive lowland area. This lowland area contains the ancient city of Antioch and the agriculturally productive Orontes Valley.

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5. Reliable information on the ethnological background of the 300,000 inhabitants of Hatay is not available. However, it appears that there is a substantial non-Turkish minority who speak Arabic and are closely related to their neighbors across the border in Syria. Turkish attempts to integrate these Arabic-speaking people have not been particularly successful. The younger generation is bilingual -- having learned Turkish in the schools -- but the language of home, shop, and field remains Arabic.

6. Despite the lack of integration into the Turkish social scene, there has been no significant separatist movement in Hatay. On the other hand, the claim has been made -- with considerable justification -- that the economy of the province would be improved if the people of Hatay had ready access to Syrian markets.

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OAD/RR:OEGuthe: [REDACTED] :amm/2817 (14 November 1957)

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